



# City of Los Altos Parklet Pilot Program Guide



*Figure 1. Rendering of a potential parklet from Downtown Vision. Courtesy of City of Los Altos.*

January 2020

## **Background**

The Los Altos City Council adopted the Downtown Vision on August 28, 2018. The vision provides the City of Los Altos with many approaches, long-term improvements, and short-term programs that would increase vibrancy in the downtown triangle. One approach from the Downtown Vision centered on Quality Placemaking because “attracting people to downtown Los Altos needs to include opportunities to interact and socialize with neighbors, to recreate and dine, as well as shop.”

One of the Downtown Vision elements was outdoor dining parklets that would expand the sidewalk into adjacent parking spaces to provide visitors and residents with outdoor dining areas complementing the downtown atmosphere. During a discussion regarding priorities for the 2019 calendar year, the City Council indicated a desire to implement a parklet pilot program as a low-cost, high-yield program from the Downtown Vision.

The Economic Development team has evaluated many different parklet programs and engaged with parklet program operators to identify the key elements that make parklets successful. After researching these options, evaluating what makes our downtown unique, and working with our Engineering staff on logistics, the team has created this Parklet Pilot Program.

The City Council unanimously approved the Parklet Pilot Program on November 19, 2019 with feedback for staff on how to ensure this program will be successful. Staff has modified the program based upon that feedback. The program is now open for all interested restaurant owners to schedule preliminary meetings with staff and create a preliminary plan for potential parklets in front of their businesses.



*Figure 2. Aerial rendering of downtown plaza from Downtown Vision Plan. Courtesy of City of Los Altos.*



Figure 3. Photo of San Francisco parklet. Courtesy of San Francisco Planning.

## Goals

With this project, the City of Los Altos aims to:

Convert parking stalls into outdoor dining hubs for Los Altos restaurants.

Increase the vibrancy and atmosphere of Downtown Los Altos.

Stimulate the local economy through increased dining area.

Foster increased interactions amongst neighbors in communal areas.

Encourage creative use of public spaces.

## **Program**

The City of Los Altos will solicit applications from restaurant owners on Main Street and State Street that would like to install parklets in adjacent public parking spaces. These restaurant owners must present a complete submittal with all required documents and be prepared to provide a fee and proof of insurance liability if approved.

The City Council has approved this program as a two-year pilot with a review scheduled for Fall 2021. At that time, the City Council has the discretion to continue, calibrate, or cancel the program.

Per Council direction, only a maximum of two parklets will be allowed per block and no parklets can be located directly across the street from one another. Preference will be given based upon the date each completed application submittal is deemed complete by staff.

The City of Los Altos Economic Development Division will evaluate the parklets on an annual basis in order to ensure that they are being properly utilized and regularly maintained by the applicant. The City of Los Altos reserves the right to alter conditions of approval or revoke a permit for an individual parklet at any time it deems necessary. The City will provide ample notification time in order to remove the parklet and return the parking space to its original condition.



*Figure 4. Photo of San Francisco parklet. Courtesy of San Francisco Planning.*

## **Material**

Per the Los Altos Downtown Design Guidelines, natural materials are strongly encouraged in front of businesses because “wood, stone, and brick can provide warmth at storefronts, and enhance the feeling of village scale and character” (Downtown Design Guidelines page 32). These parklets will preferably be made from wood with accenting flowers or shrubs.

## **Design**

The parklets are required to:

- Be public spaces that cannot be designated for customers only
- Be installed along the curb line where on-street parking is located (parallel or diagonal parking spaces)
- Have edge buffers that will enclose the space on all sides, except the sidewalk
- Meet all Americans with Disabilities Act requirements
- Have a 2% maximum running slope
- Have a 2% maximum cross slope
- Have a 3-foot setback from adjacent parking spaces and crosswalks
- Meet sight distance visibility requirements
- Meet the existing curb height
- Not cover utility access panels or storm drains
- Demonstrate the parklet does not interfere with storm water drainage or create flooding
- Have wheel stops at both ends
- Abide by all other restrictions placed by the City of Los Altos not outlined in this guide

The parklets are encouraged to:

- Be made of natural materials
- Contain flowers and shrubs enhancing the built environment
- Match or accent the colors and design of the business space
- Avoid plastic elements

## **Cost**

Parklets typically cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 for design, installation, maintenance, and furnishing. The applicant is responsible for all costs.

The City of Los Altos will charge approved business owners a fee to cover the expenses as they occur in reviewing the application. This amount will be collected after the parklet has been approved and before the permit has been issued.

## **Submittal Requirements**

- ☐ Completed copy of the Los Altos Parklet Pilot Program Application
- ☐ Narrative description of how this specific parklet will increase the vibrancy of downtown
- ☐ Detailed estimate of cost and timeline to install parklet
- ☐ Four (4) copies of plans for the proposed parklet project, including elevation drawings
- ☐ Pictures of the proposed site
- ☐ Letters of support from surrounding businesses
- ☐ Liability insurance documents to the approval of the City Attorney

Please submit all the above required documents to the City of Los Altos for review at:

Economic Development Department  
City of Los Altos  
1 N. San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

## **Process**



*Figure 5. Photo of San Francisco parklet. Courtesy of San Francisco Planning.*

If you have any questions regarding the parklets or parklet application process, please feel free to call the City of Los Altos Economic Development team at 650-947-2620.